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THEME: *Sustaining Global Development Goals
Through Languages, Education, and
Tourism*

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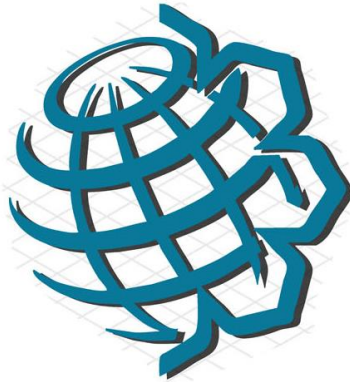
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TOURISM

3rd INTERNATIONAL
LANGUAGE AND
TOURISM
CONFERENCE
2019



SUSTAINING GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS
THROUGH
LANGUAGES, EDUCATION, AND TOURISM

**PROCEEDING OF ILTC 2019
(TOURISM)**

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE AND TOURISM CONFERENCE
2019

*Sustaining Global Development Goals Through Languages,
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CONTENT

SUB-THEME: TOURISM

1	A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON TRAVEL BROCHURES OF MULTICULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF MALAYSIA Ariezal Afzan Hassan Nur Hafezah Hussein Wan Suzanna Aafanii Adeeba Wan Ibrahim	1-13
2	ANALYZING THE PUSH AND PULL TRAVEL MOTIVATION FACTOR OF YOUTH TOURIST TOWARDS VISITING JOHOR BAHRU Syamim Syauqi Mohd Erfino Siti Salwa Md Sawari	14-21
3	AYER HITAM COMMUNITY PARTICIPATIONS IN CONSERVATION: A CONCEPTUAL PAPER Aina Farahin Binti Azli Siti Aisah Abas	22-30
4	CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY AND COMPANY IMAGE OFFERED BY AIR ASIA Aishah Zuhairi Mazni Saad	31-39
5	DEVELOPING ENGLISH VIDEO TUTORIALS TO ENHANCE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY QUALITY FOR LOCAL CULINARY IN MALANG CITY, INDONESIA Irene Nany Kusumawardani Putu Dian Danayanti Degeng Moh. Hasbullah Isnaini	40-49
6	EDUCATIONAL TOURISM: UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' INTENTION TO PURSUE THEIR EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION HUB PAGOH Muhamad Irfan Bin Bustaipo	50-67
7	EFFECT OF COGNITIVE IMAGE TOWARDS TOURIST SATISFACTION IN THEME PARKS MALAYSIA Nur Inani Bt Muhammad Zuki Siti Aisah Abas	68-80
8	E-TOURISM MAP: AN INTERACTIVE TOURISM WEB MAPPING SYSTEM AND MOBILE APPS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA Muhammad Nurrahim Ruslan Abdul Rauf Abdul Rasam Noraain Mohamed Saraf	81-94
9	EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES OF ISLAMIC TOURISM IN MALAYSIA Nor Afifin Nadia M Noor Azman Nur Najwa Zulkifle Siti Salwa Md Sawari	95-99
10	FACTOR INFLUENCING INTENTION OF IIUM STUDENTS TO CHOOSE SHARIAH COMPLIANT HOTEL Amirul Asyraf Laila Satria Siti Salwa Md Sawar	100-106
11	FOODHUNTER APPS: A GEOSPATIAL MOBILE AND SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS FOR FOOD TOURISM	107-120

Noraqila Aiman Abu | Abdul Rauf Abdul Rasam

- | | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 12 | IDENTIFYING MUSLIM YOUTH TRAVELERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF SHARIAH COMPLIANT HOTELS
Muhammad Hariz Irfan Hamdan Siti Salwa Md Sawari | 121-131 |
| 13 | ISLAMIC TOURISM IN SOUTH EAST ASIA: THE CONCEPT AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION
Dr. Zubaidi Wahyono Dr. Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak | 132-141 |
| 14 | INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (IIUM) STUDENT'S ACCEPTANCE ON VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) AS A TOURISM MARKETING TOOL
Nuraliah Atika Binti Mohd Tukit Nur Hidayah Abd Rahman | 142-160 |
| 15 | MEASURING TOURIST SATISFACTION WITH MULTIPLE MOSQUE DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES
Nor Afira Yasmin Mohammad Roffe Siti Salwa Md Sawari | 161-167 |
| 16 | MODELING AND FORECASTING: A CASE STUDY OF TOURIST ARRIVALS IN MALAYSIA
Nur Haizum Abd Rahman Nur Nabilah Jamal Nur Hidayah Abd Rahman | 168-175 |
| 17 | MOTIVATIONS OF FIRST-TIME, REPEAT, AND SERIAL MALAYSIAN BACKPACKERS
Nuraini binti Ismail Samshul Amry bin Abdul Latif | 176-190 |
| 18 | UNDERSTANDING BATEQ ETHNIC PERSONALITY AND THEIR SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT TAMAN NEGARA PAHANG
Mohd Hasrul Yushairi B. Johari Nur Adillah Binti Khairul Azman Nur Shahirah Binti Suhanan Firdaus Bin Mohd Yusof | 191-205 |
| 19 | PLASTIC OBSESSION AMONG MALAYSIAN TOURISTS: HOW FAR IS IT TRUE?
Najiyah Md Zaliki Mazni Saad | 206-219 |
| 20 | RESEARCH PARADIGMS IN ECOTOURISM RESEARCH: WHY AND HOW IT SHOULD BE APPLIED?
Velan Kunjuraman | 220-231 |
| 21 | STREET FOOD PROFILING: A CASE STUDY OF JONKER STREET MELAKA
Siti Nurhayati Khairatun | 232-246 |
| 22 | THE INFLUENCE OF PRODUCT AND TOURISM EXPENDITURE ON TOURIST PREFERENCE THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF TOURISM OBJECTIVE IN PADANG CITY
Hasdi Aimon Hari Setia Putra Nanda Alfarina | 247-257 |
| 23 | THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TRIP PLANNING PROCESS: STUDY OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS TO PAHANG | 258-269 |

Fatin Shafiq Fouzai @ Fauzi | Samshul Amry Abdul Latif

- 24 THERMAL COMFORT IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE: ARE WE REALLY COMFORTABLE IN REGION WITH INCREASE AND PROSPECT OF VOLUNTOURISM 270-279
- Elina M. Husini | Lawrence P. Moveh | Medina Chukusa | Said K. Alkali | Yakubu A. Dodo**

PLASTIC OBSESSION AMONG MALAYSIAN TOURISTS: HOW FAR IS IT TRUE?

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ABSTRACT

Plastic pollution is one of the prevalent global crises of the decade. The non-degradable nature of plastics has caused severe marine and land pollution which is responsible for the death of hundreds of marine species and birds. Over the years, the generation of plastic waste shows no sign of slowing down and The United Nations have predicted that the amount of plastic in the ocean would weigh more than fishes by 2050. The tourism industry greatly depends on the natural environment as one of its main resources to thrive. In contrast, tourism is also known to generate a great amount of waste to the environment making it as one of the contributors to this crisis. The depletion of environment would give adverse impact on the growth of tourism to a destination. It is a vicious cycle that should be stopped in ensuring the sustainability of a destination and tourism as a whole. This study is in line with targets developed under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 12 established by the United Nations that aims to substantially reduce waste production by 2030. This study intends to understand an untapped angle of the issue, from the perspective of Malaysian tourists as tourism consumers. In this study, the practice of tourists prior to travelling will be assessed to understand its influence on tourists' behaviour in regard to plastic usage during travels. By understanding tourists' behaviour, the authorities in a tourism destination could take measures that will encourage sustainable tourism practices among tourists while enjoying tourism growth and sustaining the destination in the long run.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Plastic Pollution, Tourism, Practice, Behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

It is hard to imagine a world without plastics. Yet when studied, the large-scale production of the synthetic organic polymers only dates back to 1950 after World War II (Geyer, Jambeck and Law, 2017). Data gathered 65 years later reveal that the annual production of plastic has skyrocketed to nearly 200-fold from two million tonnes in 1950 to 381 million tonnes in 2015 (Jambeck et. al, 2015). Up to now, the cumulative production of plastic has reached 7.82 billion tonnes in 2015.

In a study by Prabhakaran, Nair and Ramachandran (2016), coastal and river areas that are located near landfills also contribute to the pollution of the marine environment as a lot of estuaries have been polluted by the overspill of trash from nearby landfills. In addition, garbage may be lost to the marine environment during its collection for transportation. Thus, this further proves the poor management in dealing with plastics. With steady increase in the production rate of plastics and its existing waste management, the impact of plastic on the environment raises global concern. The everyday consumption of the plastics had only stack up the landfills without effective sustainable solution for the proper management of the waste in sight (McDermot, 2016).

Studies have established the pollution of seas and oceans as evidence to the gigantic impact made by plastic. (Haward, 2018). It had significantly contributed to the death of various species of animals as they mistakenly took plastic bags as food (Borrelle et.al, 2017). Numerous studies have found plastic debris in all major ocean basins. The growth of plastic production was further accelerated when the global culture shifted from reusable to single-use containers that had turned packaging into the largest market for plastic (United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), 2018). Every year, around 8 million tonnes of plastic flows into the marine environment. As of 2014, there is an estimated 268,940 tons of plastic debris in the ocean (McDermot, 2016). However, the estimation only depicted the number of plastics that are floating on water. Unfortunately, there are more plastics that have made its way to the ocean floor, buried in the sand or ending in the food chain.

In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) had launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) with 17 Goals and 169 targets set to be achieved by 2030. The goals were products of numerous UN agreements, conventions, intensive public consultations and engagements with civil society and other stakeholders around the world (United Nations, 2015). One of the key emphasis of the goals is towards achieving environment sustainability. The impact of human activities has taken a worrying toll on the planet. The Earth is facing dire environmental consequences that needs urgent action in ensuring its viability for the present and future generation. Four of the goals were therefore developed to tackle the issue which aims to protect the planet from further degradation. Within the 12th goal, "Responsible Production and Consumption" among the targets are to minimize waste production through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse as well as promoting public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities (United Nations, 2015).

According to World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) (2019), the tourism sector is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors with over 10% of contribution to the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 10% of total employment in 2018. Currently, the sector continuously produces waste at an abundant rate. Subsequently, UN predicted that the sector would dispose 251% of solid waste by 2050 (UNEP, 2016). To put into perspective, a study by Jambeck et. al (2015) revealed that Malaysia ranks as the 8th biggest contributor for mismanaged plastic waste globally. The study discovered that Malaysia had produced one million tons of mismanaged plastic waste in 2010 alone in which 0.14 to 0.37 million tons may have washed into the oceans. As a result, plastic debris in the oceans had caused death of many marine species, endangering species and upsetting the ecosystem with the release of dangerous toxins into the water.

The adverse impact of casual plastic usage in humans' daily lives including during travelling are threatening the environmental sustainability. Thus, this research aspires to understand the causal relationship between tourists' practice and their behaviour regarding plastic usage when travelling. Accordingly, the research also aims to identify the hindrances that are faced by travelers in observing sustainable practices concerning plastic usage and the duty of tourism sectors in assisting them.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Practice (IV)

Practice is the action that can be observed which can be shaped with an individual's or community's knowledge and attitude towards the subject matter (Babaei et. al, 2015). In relation to the subject matter, the practice refers to environmental practices performed by tourists that can be defined as actions taken that prevents and reduces environmental deterioration and ensuring its quality (Ham & Han, 2013). Consequently, practice of individuals and communities are important in influencing the performance outcome of an issue (Bühlmayer et. al, 2017).

In Malaysia, practices in relation to plastic usage remains to be at a worrying level distressing the environment severely despite multiple efforts done by the government in educating the public. In January 2011, the Ministry of Domestic Trade Cooperative and Consumerism (MDTCC) had launched the 'No Plastic Bag Campaign Day' in the effort to reduce Malaysian's plastic usage consumption (MDTCC, 2012). However, this effort has not proven to be enough to combat the issue as plastic pollution still persists and continues growing rapidly.

In today's setting, the public is used to the "throwaway culture" and plastic remains to be a part of the consumer culture. As stated by UNEP (2018), most of the plastics that are produced were created to be used only once and later disposed. In support of this statement, of all the plastics that are in the ocean, 80 percent of them are single use plastics such as plastic bottles, plastic shopping bags, or cigarette lighters that originated from land-based waste (Tibbets, 2015). To put into perspective, the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment & Climate Change (MESTECC), Malaysia (2018) and Jambeck et.al

(2015) stated that Malaysia is ranked to be the 8th largest producer of mismanaged plastic waste in the world.

2.2. Behaviour (DV)

Tourists behaviour can be defined as the way in which tourists conducts themselves during travels (Vuuren and Slabbert, 2012). Based on the three-tier waste heriarchy, the waste reduction behaviour consists of “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” whereby the best way of reducing waste is to prevent producing waste in the first place (e.g., buying fewer products and avoid buying products in excessive unnecessary packaging) before going down the heriarchy with reusing and recycling products (Hultman and Corvellec, 2012; Whitmarsh, Haggar and Thomas, 2018). In line with this idea, UNEP (2018) also pointed out that the reduction of plastic waste should follow the waste management hierarchy that includes acting in trimming the production of plastic waste in the first place.

As a rapidly growing industry, the United Nations have predicted that the waste generated by the tourism industry at this rate would ultimately shoot up to 251% by 2050. In a study conducted by Shamshiry (2011), it was revealed that the amount of waste produced by a tourist was double than the amount of waste produced by a local resident in Langkawi. Furthermore, plastic waste constitutes the second highest percentage of all waste that was generated.

Moreover, a previous study conducted by Whitmarsh, Haggar and Thomas (2018) found that the level of waste reduction behaviour during travel were found to be lower as compared to their waste reduction behaviour at home and workplace. In addition, Hoang, Fujiwara and Phu (2017) found that the waste generated by businesses supporting tourists activities such as restaurants and hotels significantly contributed to the municipal waste generation in a tourism destination. In the same study, it was also found that the average guest in a four-star hotel produced over three times more waste as compared to the average guests that stayed in two and three-star hotel with more than half of the waste made of plastic.

Essentially, this calls for tourists to adopt actions to reduce plastic consumption from further damaging the environment. In an article by Evans, Welch & Swaffield (2017), it was argued that the consumers need to have accountability with the country’s high food waste production as it is also stemmed from the individual consumer behaviour where the same principal can be applied with the case of plastic consumption. Conclusively, , behavioural change on the way products are consumed is vital towards achieving sustainability.

2.3. Practice (IV) on Behaviour (DV)

The relationship between practice and behaviour has been studied by several scholars. A study conducted by Borgstede and Biel (2012) where they studied how different factors in a situation would affect one's pro-environment behaviour. It was stated that if the person is individually motivated to have environmentally friendly practices, the likelihood for them to change their behaviour is lesser than those who are motivated by their surroundings environment such as an organizational culture. Accordingly, the study from Biel, Borgstede and Dahlstrand (1999) also supports the argument above as the author discovered that situational conditions to an extent have an influence towards one's behaviour. If the situation puts the person in a position where they need to sacrifice something in order to practice pro-environmental practices, the probability for them to stick with the practice lessen.

An interesting study by Slocum and Curtis (2016) compared between tourists' sustainable food practices at home and food behaviours when travelling at national parks around Utah. The study found that there was a decrease in their sustainable food behaviour when travelling compared to at home. However, those who had low sustainable food practice maintained their behaviour during traveling. Only those with medium and high practices at home showed a decline in sustainable food behaviour when traveling. The study suggested that this could be caused by the lack of interest in Utah's local food and low of promotional effort by Utah in encouraging tourists sustainable food behaviours such as going to the farmers' market and trying new recipes.

Moreover, a study by Almutairi (2016) assessed relationship between students' religious practice and smoking behaviour in a Saudi Arabian College. The study found that students who have high religious practice would avoid smoking proving positive relationship between the variables. Correspondingly, the study by Yusof et. al (2016) and Shen, Dumont and Deng (2018) exhibited similar finding where positive relationship between the two variables were proven.

2.4. Framework

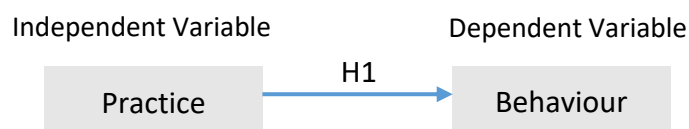


Figure 1: Research Framework Model adapted from Yusof et. al (2016)

The framework of this study (Figure 1) is adapted from Yusof et.al (2016). Based on the model above, the arrow indicates a positive relationship between tourists' practice and behaviour with plastic usage.

H1: There is a positive relationship between practice and tourists' behaviour with plastic usage

2.5. Research Question

- 1) What is the influence of practice on tourists' behaviour with plastic usage?
- 2) What are the challenges faced by the respondents to reduce plastic usage?

2.6. Research Objective

- 1) To analyse the relationship between tourists' practice with behaviour in regard to plastic usage
- 2) To recognize the challenges encountered by tourists in eliminating plastic usage in their travels

3. Methodology

This study utilized quantitative cross-sectional approach conducted through survey. A set questionnaire developed was divided into four sections; demographic, independent variable, dependent variable and open-ended section. The questions were prepared by adapting questions from previous researches that studied the variables in similar fields of study.

3.1. Population and Sample

3.1.1. Population

The target population determined is Malaysians above the age of 18 to 64 years old who have experienced travel. However, the specific data of this population is unknown. Thus, it can only be estimated that the number of the population is over one million tourists as the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2018) have recorded 205.4 million domestic visitors in 2017 where most tourists are between the age group.

3.1.2. Sample

The number of the sample is identified through the utilization of theory adopted from "Small Sample Techniques" formula developed by the research division of the National Education Association (1960) popularized by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as they constructed a tabulation for the sample size to facilitate referencing. In referring to the tabulation and graph of the sample size, this research has determined that the number of sample size shall be 384 people based on the formula provided. However, this research was conducted as a pilot study. As suggested by Johanson & Brooks (2010), it was estimated that 30 respondents are an adequate number for preliminary survey or scale and the larger the sample size, the better the result.

3.1.3.Data Collection

A non-probability types of sampling known as the convenient sampling was utilized for this study. The method of survey was to gather primary data and the survey was conducted by distributing a set of standardized questions given to the samples through the online survey platform developed in Google Form and by physically handing the printed questionnaire.

3.1.4.Research Instrument

This research adapts and compiled questions that were used as survey questions from several studies as demonstrated in Table 1. The questionnaire was designed in an arranged order where it is divided into four sections. It starts with close-ended questions on the respondent's demographic, followed by questions designated for the independent (Practice) and dependent variables (Tourist's Behaviour) accordingly.

Table 1: *Adapted Question Items*

	Question Items	Author/ year
Section one: Demographic Profile	1.1-1.3	Self-developed
Section two: Practice	2.1-2.6	Mota (2015); Aman, Harun & Hussein (2012); Bortoleto, Kurisu, & Hanaki, K. (2012); Ferdous & Das (2014); Masud et al. (2015).
Section three: Tourist's Behaviour	3.1-3.6	Mota (2015); Miller, Merrilees & Coghlan (2014); Ferdous & Das (2014).
Section four: Open-ended question on challenges and suggestion to reduce plastic usage	1-2	Self-developed

4. Result

4.1. Response Rate

47 responses were collected after the questionnaires were distributed through convenient sampling method over the course of one week via social media platform; WhatsApp groups accessible to the author.

4.2. Reliability Test

Table 2: Cronbach Alpha Value of Practice and Behaviour

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha Value	N of Items
Practice	0.819	6
Behaviour	0.88	6

The variables were analysed in SPSS to ensure reliability of the item and is illustrated in Table 2. Based on the table, the Cronbach Alpha's value of practice (0.819) and Behaviour (0.88) surpassing the acceptable range (Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait, 2015). Therefore, all of the items used under this variable shall be retained.

4.3. Sample Profiles

Table 3: Demographic of Respondents

		Frequency, <i>n</i>	Percentage, %
Region of Residence	Northern	3	6.4
	Central	34	72.3
	East Coast	2	14.9
	Southern	7	4.3
	Sabah/ Sarawak	1	2.1
	Total	47	100
Age	18-24 Years Old	42	89.4
	25-34 Years Old	4	8.5
	45-54 Years Old	1	2.1
	Total	47	100
Level of Education	SPM	6	12.8
	Diploma	6	12.8
	Degree	35	74.5
	Total	47	100

4.4. Feedback on open-ended

41 respondents have contributed to the findings. Most of the respondents commented that they find that plastic is convenient to be used to carry items especially when they buy many products. Besides that, the respondents were unprepared with reusable bags and straws when they shop and most of the products are still packed in plastic packaging without having environmental-friendly product options to be purchased. In addition, some tourists also stated that they use plastic regularly out of habit and see it as a need to be reused for their rubbish bin linings.

40 respondents had proposed suggestions to help them in cutting down plastic usage. Majority of the tourists proposed that efforts in spreading awareness among the tourists should be increased by handling effective and high impact programs. Some of the tourists also suggested that firmer enforcement should be executed by the government through banning or raising the price for plastics and increase tourists' access to environmental-friendly products. Other respondents believed that the tourists should have the initiative to bring their own reusable materials with them.

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Table 4: *Practice*

No	Practice	Mean	Std. Deviation
P1	I avoid buying products in plastic as much as possible	4.13	1.135
P2	Looking for recyclable products have become part of my routine	3.85	1.383
P3	I have switched from one brand to another due to my concern on the issue of plastic pollution	3.38	1.311
P4	I use my reusable products when going shopping rather than one provided by the shop.	4.06	1.258
P5	I always reuse the plastic bags that I have	4.64	1.358
P6	I have made major efforts to reduce my plastic usage last year	4.15	1.122

Based on the mean score generated, the items under practice recorded the responses having the range of mean from 3.85 to 4.64 (Table 4). This indicates that the respondents on average slightly agreed and agreed in having practiced the practices as stated in the items. However, the standard deviation value revealed that the responses received under the following items highly varied from the mean score as all the items showcased value of more than 1.

Table 5: *Behaviour*

No	Behaviour	Mean	Std. Deviation
B1	I am conscious about my usage of plastic even when I am on holiday	4.30	1.082
B2	I am responsible for my plastic usage even when I travel	4.60	.993
B3	When travelling, I still reflect about the consequences of my plastic usage to the environment	4.23	1.165
B4	It is not essential for me to use plastic products when I purchase any goods when travelling	4.34	1.185
B5	When shopping, I assess the type of packaging and choose one that is recyclable.	3.74	1.539
B6	I do my best in my habits to prevent plastic waste during travel	4.32	1.218

After testing the items under behaviour, the mean score for behaviour were all calculated to be over 4.0 except for item B5 that entailed a 3.74 mean score. This implies that in general the respondents slightly agreed to item B5 and on average agreed that the respondents behaved as what had been stated under each respective item. However, the standard deviation value disclosed that the responses on the items highly varies from one response to another as the value exceed 1 except for item in B2 whereby the value did not exceed 1.

4.5. Hypotheses Testing

4.5.1. Correlation among dimensions

Table 6: *Pearson's Correlation Table*

		Practice
Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

4.5.1.1. Practice (IV)

Practice showed positive and significant correlation with behaviour where the value was computed to be .762 ($p < .05$). Based on the Pearson Correlation indicator, the relationship between practice and behavior falls under 0.76 – 0.99 that indicated very strong relationship between the two variables.

5. DiscussionRQ1: What is the influence of Practice on tourists' behaviour with plastic usage?

This study had tested the influence of practice on behaviour in H1. According to the analysis, it was discovered that practice portrayed significant positive influence on behaviour where the relationship strength was categorized to be very strong. This implies that if the tourists have high level of practice in reducing plastic usage at home the tourists are most likely to exhibit high level of behaviour in reducing plastic usage during their travels. This finding is observed to be consistent with previous researches that studies the relationship of the two variables (Almutairi, 2015; Yusof et al., 2016; Dumont, Shen and Deng, 2016; Borgstede and Biel, 2015).

5.1.2. RQ2: What are the challenges faced by the respondents to reduce plastic usage?

The respondents treat plastic as a convenience in their travels especially when they went for shopping and bought a lot of goods. Aside from that, several respondents usually do not prepare themselves with their reusable products when traveling that had resulted them having to use plastic. Some also commented that there were little to no option for the tourists to find products that were not packaged in plastic.

This calls for all stakeholders including suppliers, concerned authority and tourists to play their respective roles in minimizing and controlling the issue of plastic pollution in ensuring environmental sustainability of Malaysia as a tourism destination. The suppliers of the tourism industry such as food and beverage, accommodation, tour agencies, transportation and attraction play vital roles in reducing the provision of plastic, particularly single-use plastics in products and services. Alternative and sustainable materials could be used as substitution. Tourists as consumers are crucial in influencing the supply of plastics in the tourism industry as the businesses seeks to enhance tourists' satisfaction which is by meeting the demand of tourists. Aside from that, individual initiatives in shifting their habits from adopting the disposable to reusable culture would result in the reduction of plastic waste production. Reusable and eco-friendly products such as reusable bags and straws are more accessible to be purchased by consumers.

5.1.3. H1: There is a positive relationship between practice and tourists' behaviour with plastic usage

When the items under practice were selected to be tested by Cronbach Alpha, the value showed that all the items used were accepted. The Pearson Correlation analysis was tested on H1. As a result, the value exhibited very strong and significant relationship between practice and behaviour. Consequently, this signifies if there is increase in the level of practice, the behaviour would be significantly influenced. Therefore, H1 is supported.

This finding is proven to be consistent with Almutairi (2015); Yusof et al (2016); Dumont, Shen and Deng (2016); Borgstede and Biel (2015) which had found positive linear relationship between practice and behaviour. From this result, tourism suppliers and concerned authority can conduct research in understanding the basis of tourists practice and formulate strategies in increasing the practice of Malaysian tourists with sustainable consumption of plastic in order to encourage positive tourists' behaviour which is minimizing plastic usage during travels.

6. Conclusion

In essence, this study managed to find the positive relationship between tourists' behaviour with plastic usage. Therefore, these factors should be taken into consideration when developing plans and strategies in reducing the usage of plastics among tourists in minimizing the negative impact brought about by the tourism sector to the environment. In particular, the issue of waste generation and plastic pollution in a tourism destination. This area should be explored by the key players of the industry as the impact of mismanaged plastic waste and pollution could reduce the aesthetic value and sustainability of a tourism destination. If there is no action taken despite the increasing plastic waste generation, Malaysia could suffer from loss of tourism resources such as the destruction of marine environment, deplete in interest among tourists and be associated with bad image.

7. Suggestion

To better understand the factors that influence tourists' behaviour with plastic usage, the framework theory should be formulated by incorporating factors that influence the adoption of practice for tourists such as knowledge and attitude. This will give an insight to practitioners in understanding which factor that contribute most to tourists' behaviour and from there, effective strategies and measures could be employed to combat the dire issue of plastic pollution.

Bibliography: Najiyah Md Zaliki, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Malaysia, najiyahzalik@gmail.com and Plastic Obsession Among Malaysian Tourists: How far is it true?

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